

AGENDA ITEM - 07

SHREWSBURY ELECTRIC & CABLE OPERATIONS

COMMISSION MEETING

**April 22, 2020 – 10:00 AM
MINUTES**

Conducted Via Remote Participation

**PRESENT: R. HOLLAND - Chairman
M. LEMIEUX
K. MARSHALL
M. REFOLO
A. TRIPPI**

ABSENT: NONE

OTHERS

**PRESENT: K. MIZIKAR
T. KENNEDY
K. ANDERSON
K. RYBA
C. ROY (Part-time)
J. PRATT (Part-time)
J. MALAVER (Part-time)**

1. Open Session Called to Order at 10:00 AM

R. Holland called the meeting to order stating that both he and Keven Mizikar, Town Manager, will take turns presenting questions to each of three finalist applicants for the position of SELCO General Manager, filling the position to be vacated by Michael Hale after ten years of distinguished service as the General Manager.

Mr. Holland called on all members to confirm they are present and able to hear him.

Roll call,

Anthony Trippi – “Here”

Kelly Marshall – “Here”

Maria Lemieux – “Here”

Michael Refolo – “Here”

Kevin Mizikar – “Here”

Kristina Anderson – “Here”

Tom Kennedy – “Here”

Kathy Ryba – “Here”

Christopher Roy – “Here”

We thank SMC and Marc Serra for their support and with their remote media presentations.

He stated that the remaining two candidates, Joel Malaver and Jackie Pratt, were asked not to view or listen to this meeting because the same format of questions will be used with each of the candidates.

Mr. Holland continued,

Good morning, this Open Meeting of the SELCO Commission is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker’s Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the “COVID-19 Virus.”

In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor’s Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

The Order, which you can find posted with agenda materials for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.

Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will not feature public comment.

For this meeting, the SELCO Commission is convening by videoconference via Google as posted on the Town’s Website identifying how the public may join.

Please note that this meeting is being recorded, and that all attendees are participating by video conference.

Accordingly, please be aware that other folks may be able to see you, and take care not to “screen share” your computer unless asked by the chairperson or the staff person. Anything that you broadcast may be captured by the recording.

We are now turning to the first item on the agenda which is the interview of Mr. Roy. Before we do so, permit me to cover some ground rules for effective and clear conduct of our business and to ensure accurate meeting minutes.

- I, the Chair will introduce each Board Member or Staff Member who has the lead role for this particulate item or guest/speaker associated with this item on the agenda. After they conclude their remarks, the Chair will go down the line of Members first and then to staff members, inviting each by name to provide any comment or questions. I will then call upon the members to offer a motion and then for a second. Please hold until your name is called. Further,
 - Please remember to mute your phone or computer when you are not speaking; remember that unless a document is being shared, your camera feed is triggered by your speaking or background noise;
 - Please remember to speak clearly and in a way that helps generate accurate minutes.

Each vote taken during this meeting will be taken by roll call vote.

Three candidate interviews will be conducted today. There will not be a final decision made today during this meeting. The only roll call votes to be taken today will be between breaks and a final vote to secure the end of the meeting.

Questions posed to each of the three finalists included, but not were limited to, the following:

1. The first question is tailored specifically out of the first round or from a detailed final review of the candidate’s resume.

2. Assume you are the GM of SELCO. It is midnight during a winter storm and the Internet goes down in three areas of town. What do you do?

3. Can you share with us the regulatory and legislative experience you have that would help you in the role of GM?

4. What areas would you consider most important and what criteria would you use to assess SELCO’s performance?

5. The SELCO GM reports to the five Commissioners but is also the face of SELCO to Shrewsbury’s municipal government, its Selectmen and their constituents, Town Meeting Members, and the Shrewsbury town management team. Do you have experience working within this type of construct?

6. *How do you tend to manage your direct reports? How often do you meet, what are your lines of communication and reporting, and how do you like to give feedback and assessments?*

7. *What would you see as important performance metrics for the GM?*

8. *What, in your opinion, are the most significant changes impacting the electric utility industry?*

Companies like Verizon, ATT and T-Mobile are investing billions into next generation cellular builds; “5G” will provide gig-a-byte speeds and potentially eliminate the need for fixed wired services. Share your thoughts on this and what it means for deployment of fiber to the home technology. What do you feel are the primary advantages and disadvantages of fiber delivery systems vs. DOCSIS?

9. *Efforts to get to “net zero” greenhouse gas emissions are gaining regulatory and legislative traction in Massachusetts. Do you have an opinion on if and how renewable energy fits into power supply planning for a utility?*

10. *Where do you see the cable ecosystem in five years and what do you see as the priority areas for SELCO to address proactively?*

11. *Are there any other experiences you would like to share with us today? Any questions for us?*

2. GM Candidate Interview – Candidate #1 Christopher Roy – 10:00 AM

C. Roy stated that he is currently the General Manager of Belmont. Prior to that, he was at another municipal utility in Concord. One of his strengths is a deep passion for public power. Involved in some national associations that tout public power. Exciting opportunity to bring his enthusiasm to Shrewsbury and build on what is already highly successful.

Q. You have implemented fiber in two different towns already. What do you bring to SELCO to ensure a seamless deployment of the \$30M FTTH project in Shrewsbury? How will you go about to get to know your staff?

Response: Completed FTTH projects in both Concord and Belmont; will bring lessons learned. Learned to better design and future-proof engineering elements of the fiber in Concord and is applying the same in the early stages of the present project in Belmont. Knowledge of the construction including available consulting firms, outreach to the community, and knowledge of finances. Experience will help elevate the success of the project.

Q. The Shrewsbury community, including the Commission, view the employees of SELCO as our number one strength. With all the challenges facing you as the GM of SELCO, how will you get to know your staff?

Response: Been going through the same thing at Belmont. Will use Google platforms to meet staff. Make sure to come in, learn the operation, understand that things are going successfully, keep an open mind, and see if any adjustments/modifications are needed. If so, make adjustments in a respectful way.

Q. Assuming you are the GM of SELCO. It is midnight during a winter storm and the Internet goes down in three areas of town. What do you do?

Response: If in the early stages of employment, leverage the expertise of the team. Keep an open mind. The team has done this before. As a new GM, the role is what can I do to help you? Manage the communication end of things, making sure that there is a leadership presence. Make sure other stakeholders are in the loop, Commission and town officials. Assist staff and break down any barriers that they might encounter.

Q. Can you share with us the regulatory and legislative experience you have and how they would help you in the role of GM?

Response: Touting the public power brand is more important now than ever. Biggest official and professional involvement started in 2015, participating on the national stage in the APPA legislative rally in Washington, DC. Same legislative energy has more impact on the local level. Involved in the energy and broadband committees. Being on the E&E side, worked closely on strategies. Written letters to politicians to local politicians encouraging the formation of public power entities to replace IOUs in the area. Helped create a flyer that highlights the advantages of public power for customers and local politicians. Recently served on APPA's DEED, research and development arm, representing Region 8, the northeast side of the country, for grants, internships and other innovative projects that keep public power on the cutting edge.

Q. What areas would you consider most important and what criteria would you use to assess SELCO's performance?

Response: Elements discussed through various strategic planning processes. Looked at Shrewsbury's DPU reports, annual reports, debt coverage ratios, rates/bond ratings, and financial health. Workforce turnover/retirements are a big issue with utilities. Identifying key positions that are at risk. Understanding where the opportunities are in planning for the future.

Q. The SELCO GM reports to the five Commissioners but you are also the face of SELCO to Shrewsbury's municipal government, its Selectmen and their constituents, Town Meeting Members, and the Shrewsbury town management team. Do you have experience working within this type of construct?

Response: Frequently engage with Selectmen/Light Board, Town Administrator, and many town officials in Belmont. Gave presentations both in and outside of the community. Internal and external organizations, speaking engagements regularly to highlight all the initiatives.

Q. How do you intend to manage your direct reports? What is your management approach?

Response: Proper recruiting. By proponent of empowerment, looking at it as coach versus boss. Leadership training. Fully supportive of helping staff to achieve goals. Encourage training and personal growth.

Q. What would you see as important performance metrics for the GM?

Response: Ensure that the activities of the organizations align with the community's vision. Determine what the vision is then identify steps need to be taken to accomplish that vision. Looked at latest SELCO Customer Service Survey that highlights the top three issues raised by the survey: Reliability, cost of service, and reduction of the carbon footprint. Identify what is important in the community and assign appropriate goals and directives.

Q. What, in your opinion, are the most significant changes impacting the electric utility industry?

Response: Climate objectives, reliability/cost, and workforce impact. Make sure that the team is in place to be successful.

Q. What, in your opinion, are the most significant changes impacting the cable industry?

Response: Broadband. Through the Concord business studies as well as in Belmont, the TV side is really a challenge to maintain financial stability. Keeping up with expediential data needs. Major challenge will be transitioning people from the traditional cable system to the new fiber system.

Q. How do you feel that 5G will impact the FTTH, if at all?

Response: Strongest answer is, whether it is 5G or FTTH, everything requires a backbone that needs to be provided by someone. Fiber is the best future proof option.

Q. Efforts to get to "net zero" greenhouse gas emissions are gaining regulatory and legislative traction in Massachusetts. Do you have an opinion on this and how renewable energy fits into power supply planning for a utility?

Response: Opinion based on experience, all initiatives are absolutely doable. The time period is more subjective. Involved with the most aggressive climate plans in Concord and Belmont. Targeting 66% non-emitting in 2020 and 100% in 2022. Key component is understanding the proper mix of renewable technologies to balance the climate objectives with the financial impact.

Q. Have you installed any battery back-ups in Belmont?

Response: No battery experience, as yet. A project is planned in Belmont. Did pricing models.

Q. Have you also been involved with Concord and/or Belmont where the electric vehicles and/or charging stations; effort to electrify the community?

Response: Absolutely. Responsible for the procurement, design, and deployment of the first stations in Concord. Belmont had existing stations.

Q. Where do you see the cable ecosystem in five years and what do you see as the priority areas for SELCO to address this proactively?

Response: My opinion, five years from now, most important to transition to the fiber network. With the present COVID environment, the need has been accelerated to transition to fiber. Help educate the community on maximizing services and adjusting to a different environment. Focused on providing reliable Broadband service in Concord.

Q. In Concord, did you completely go to fiber or did you have cable or a separate contractor?

Response: The decision was made to focus on Broadband only. Decided the TV side was too complicated. Streaming will take over. No need to expand the business with TV and telephone.

Q. Are there any experiences you would like to share with us today? Any successes or challenges to share; or questions for us?

C. Roy Q. What do you see as the most critical issues facing SELCO that should be addressed or continued?

Response: R. Holland stated that the Commission is not looking for change in the manner of leadership. In regards to recruitment, there is a large age gap in the workforce. Bring in smart grid mentality and eventually move SELCO from the cable to the fiber business.

C. Roy Q. What is the environment for looking at strategic electrification?

Response: R. Holland stated SELCO is looking to work mutually with the community to determine just how far ahead to go especially considering the current environment.

K. Mizikar asked Mr. Roy to describe his last two organizations' communication; relationship of the municipal and the town.

Response: Concord is very similar to SELCO. The Town Manager appoints the Light Board. The Light Department works very closely with the Town Manager to make sure Concord Light's objectives were aligned with the Town Manager's goals that are inherently the community's goals; same with Town Meeting. Participated in weekly Town leadership meetings. Collaborative effort with all Town departments. The same with Belmont other than in the governing structure where, in Belmont, the Select Board is the same as the Light Board.

R. Holland asked the Commission if there were any other questions.

Roll call vote:

A. Trippi – “No”
M. Refolo – “No”
K. Marshall – “No”
M. Lemieux – “No”
M. Refolo – “No”
R. Holland – “No”
K. Mizikar – “Thank you for your time.”

A motion:

Motion to adjourn and reconvene at 11:15 AM.

Motion made by A. Trippi and seconded by M. Refolo.

Roll Call:

A. Trippi - “Yes”
K. Marshall - “Yes”
M. Lemieux – “Yes”
M. Refolo – “Yes”
R. Holland – “Yes”

Meeting adjourned – 11:01 AM

3. **GM Candidate Interview – Candidate #2 Jackie Pratt – Called to order at 11:15 AM**

R. Holland called on all members to confirm they are present and able to hear him.

Roll call,

A. Trippi – “Here”
M. Lemieux – “Here”
K. Marshall – “Here”
M. Refolo – “Here”
K. Mizikar – “Here”
T. Kennedy – “Here”
K. Anderson – “Here”
K. Ryba – “Here”

J. Pratt stated that she has been with SELCO for sixteen plus years. Originally joined as the Web Site Administer, became the Marketing Manager in 2006 and the Manager of Marketing and Customer Service in 2011. Oversees many business functions in the organization: marketing, customer service, billing, collections, programming negotiations, energy efficiency programs serve and represents SELCO on a number of boards on both the electric and cable side. Has experience in all aspects of the organization.

Q. How do you prepare to oversee operations in the electric, cable, and Internet arenas and make your presence better known?

Response: Have a really good day to day interface with all of the departments less so with field personnel although there are frequent interactions. Constantly working with different industry organizations, staying abreast of trends, technology changes, legislation, and regulatory issues. Believes she is in a good position to step into the role of General Manager. Communicates often and well with other managers.

Q. Assume you are the GM of SELCO. It is midnight during a winter storm and the Internet goes down in three areas of town. What do you do?

Response: First, get staff in to answer customer calls. Important that customer calls are answered by SELCO personnel and not the answering service. Customers need to know that SELCO is in action, rolling trucks into the field to resolve the issue. Office and Headend personnel analyze the situation, important for good public communication. Keep an eye out for the extent and duration which determines the direction to go in. Will be the conduit between field and office staff to keep everyone updated as to what is happening.

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Q. Can you share with us the regulatory and legislative experience you have that would help you in the role of GM?

Response: SELCO is engaged with the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) who does a lot of SELCO's power purchasing contracts and keeps SELCO up to date on regulatory requirements. On the Cable side, very familiar with the American Cable Association (ACA) who regularly sends out regulatory and legislation updates. Confident in knowing what's on the horizon. On the electric side, very engaged with New England Public Power Association (NEPPA), Municipal Electric Association of Massachusetts (MEAM) and the American Public Power Association (APPA.) Stays in touch with other municipals in Massachusetts. Currently serves as Chair on the Home Energy Loss Prevention Service (HELPS), serves on the Communication and Services Committee for MEAM, serves on the Education Committee for NEPPA, and is the Northeast Representative for Region 7 for the National Cable Television Co-Op (NCTC.) Attends many committee meetings and conferences.

Q. What areas would you consider most important and what criteria would you use to assess SELCO's performance?

Response: First and foremost, SELCO needs to be accountable to its customers. Good service at a fair price, providing services that the customer wants in a fiscally responsible way. Main metric is the Customer Satisfaction Survey. Rate comparisons with other utilities. Monitoring changes in the cable industry, Broadband, to make sure that SELCO's technology is appropriate for where we need to go.

Q. The SELCO GM reports to the five Commissioners but is also the face of SELCO to Shrewsbury's municipal government, its Selectmen and their constituents, Town Meeting Members, and the Shrewsbury town management team. Tell us about your experience working within this concern.

Response: As stated before, represents SELCO on a number of different committees and commissions within the industry and does well on that front, on a TV show with M. Lemieux, interfaces with the SELCO Commission regularly when called upon, and when necessary, goes before the Board of Selectmen. Very comfortable and familiar with everyone. Representing SELCO is important; being able to communicate to a diverse stakeholder group, whether internal or external, our Town partners is really important.

Q. R. Holland asked, what are some specific challenges working with that group?

Response: No challenges with the Commission. No challenges with boards that I work with. They ask really good questions which shows that they are engaged in terms of what SELCO is doing is really the right thing. It's important to have the right answer. In terms of dealing with the public, I love dealing with the public, one of the best things that I do. Has really good conversations with the public. No challenges because it's something that I am prepared for.

Q. How do you tend to manage your direct reports? What is your management approach?

Response: Touch base daily with folks who directly report to me. Door is always open and ready to collaborate. Important to have good rapport with all employees. Likes to know how they are doing, what they need to do their jobs well, let them know what I am working on and if it impacts them. Takes the opportunity to update staff on what the organization is currently doing. SELCO has really good, responsible staff. Given the right tools and directions, they do their jobs really well. Not an interventionist. No need to be a micromanager. Steps back which is more of a relationship building.

Q. If you become the General Manager, what would you see as the important performance metrics we should use to evaluate your performance?

Response: Based on accomplishments of tasks, goals and directives. How well things are working. Are we maintaining a good reputation, are our systems reliable, are we accomplishing our tasks in a timely way, are we hitting budget numbers, are we supporting employees, helping them meet their full potential, are we investing in staff to make sure that they have the expertise needed to move to the phase or level?

Q. What, in your opinion, are the most significant changes impacting the electric utility industry?

Response: Legislation that is pushing SELCO to net zero, greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 that will change the face of the electric market. Need for more renewables, carbon free resources to come on line. Deployment of AMI puts SELCO in a good position improving efficiencies on the operations and engineering sides that best supports the customers understanding their actual consumption and needs. Shift from fossil fuels to electricity for transportation, home heating and cooling. Increase in generation whether battery or solar. SELCO's load will change with customers using electricity at different times. AMI will help manage costs.

Q. Can you provided the same, within the same context, what, in your opinion, is the most significant challenge impacting the cable and Internet service side of the industry?

Response: There is definitely a shift away from the traditional cable model. SELCO is primarily a Broadband business. Programming cost increases have driven customers away from cable who substitute programming that includes Netflix, Over the Top, Hulu, Sling TV or You Tube TV. Shifting dynamic with the combination of price and technology. Being a bandwidth provider, SELCO needs to be alert to bandwidth needs will grow and change. With the pandemic, a lot more people are working from home, which may continue. Fiber To The Home will provide reliable, symmetrical service to meet customer needs. SELCO is their connection to the world.

Q. How could 5G impact this?

Response: 5G is the biggest competitive threat. There are three bands within 5G – the low band which is 4G for data transfer rates, mid band which is 100 to 400 meg per second, and the millimeter meter band that is high frequency. There are challenges with 5G, shorter range and penetration. Not seen as an immediate threat. Once SELCO moves to FTTH, SELCO will be

able to reevaluate the types of packages offered, increase the upstream to full symmetrical packages. There could be some erosion if 5G is ahead of SELCO's FTTH deployment. SELCO could get those customers back. SELCO's goal is to give customers the best product at a fair price.

Q. Efforts to get to "net zero", you mentioned, greenhouse gas emissions are gaining regulatory and legislative traction in Massachusetts. I am sure that you have an opinion on and if and how renewable energy fits into power supply planning for a utility?

Response: SELCO is at 36 to 44% carbon free power in its portfolio that meets the benchmarks that are a few years away. Continued investment in long term contracts with MMWEC as well as projects like the landfill solar project. Believe there will be challenges in the way that carbon free is being measured. There are two parts to the renewable generation sources. The actual energy that is being generated with no carbon output then the value of the Renewable Energy Credit (REC). The REC is used to trade on the market to offset carbon emissions in other areas. What makes the landfill solar project affordable to invest in is the recoup of the RECs and still receive carbon free power. May need to reevaluate the RECs on some projects where SELCO retains them rather than selling them. SELCO has always had one of the lowest rates in the State compared to other public power utilities and Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs.) Rates may change and increase but it will still be the goal to remain among the lowest and try to do it in the most efficient and effective way respecting both financial and environmental responsibilities, meeting the goals set by the State and making sure to make the best decisions we can. One of the advantages of being a public utility is the option to enter into long term contracts, own generation sources. There is a lot of opportunity on that front and we can rely on MMWEC to find good solutions on problems as they come up.

Q. In your role of General Manager, you see the use of batteries, charging stations, and the like, the establishment, should we be involved in that?

Response: Do not know if it is an appropriate or inappropriate role for SELCO to own a bunch of charging stations. Some utilities do own some public charging stations. So far, we have taken the approach of seeking grant opportunities to deploy things like that. We may reach a point in time where customer demand and our own desire to try to improve the environment, we may want to establish some public charging stations regardless of the availability of grants although we will still monitor to see if grants become available. With battery storage, Sterling has an interesting project that they are working on. SELCO can see it as a potential, viable solution to take advantage of shifting load when the sun is shining. We can incentivize customers, encouraging behaviors that align with SELCO goals.

Q. Where do you see the cable ecosystem in five years and what do you see as the priority areas for SELCO to address proactively?

Response: Video is a huge challenge. In frequent touch with ACA regarding Retransmission Consent rules and regulations. Retransmission Consent is the result of the 1992 Cable Act that enables the local broadcast stations, ABC, NBC, CBS, WCVB, etc., to opt into local cable operators, to be on their line up as a Must Carry or opt into Retransmission Consent. SELCO has

to negotiate with broadcasters to arrive at an agreement where they allow us to add their channel to our lineup. There is a fee associated with this where costs trickle down to the customer. Working with the ACA to get some relief on the Federal level. If SELCO chooses to remain in the video business, there will be the need to come up with an IP delivery system rather than RF and an end-user solution that is compatible with fiber. The biggest challenge is dealing with the rate increases and find a way to provide service to those customers who have a limited opportunity to get on line.

Q. Are there any other experiences you would like to share with us today? Any questions for us?

Response: Have a good handle on 5G, providing customers with services that they want. There a huge desire to see increased upload speeds. Need to get some good answers on the video side. In a good position to help evaluate. As far as competitive threats, would like to do another SWAT analysis, similar M. Hale's when he first came in as GM, on both electric and cable. In terms of the FTTH project, there are many moving parts. We may want to get a project manager on a contract basis to oversee the project and bring it all into alignment. There is a lot of promise in the AMI project. A lot of impact on engineering, billing, collections, customer, and business sides. We have a good handle on how our day to day business works. Need to stay on top of all the projects. Improve communications between all the departments. Give staff the opportunity to expand their knowledge base. Have comprehensive understanding of all the different projects. Encourage people to create an environment where staff members have the opportunity to thrive, make a difference and feel good about what they are doing on a day to day basis.

JP Q: Do you have any concerns about my ability to be able to lead? Concern? Deficit?

Response: R. Holland asked, how are you going to get yourself up to speed with the actual linemen, electric and cable level side of the house? We are going to show them the three interviews and get their feedback to the Board before making any decisions. We will let the folks that you are going to lead make that decision too so you are talking to them as you are talking to us. Ask what their satisfaction is. I have no issues.

Side note to viewers, R. Holland added: It is not SELCO's prerogative to add 5G to the Town.

Response: J. Pratt stated that SELCO has never actively taken any steps to prevent competition from coming into town. SELCO is owned by the people of Shrewsbury. The benefit that SELCO provides in addition to a fair price and good service is, as part of the return on investment to customers, is the financial return to the Town. That revenue stream contributes to keeping our tax rates low, mitigating increases which is largely contributable to good management on the Town side with conservative budgeting. With competition coming into the Town, there is a chance of a real financial impact. If a significant amount of people leave SELCO, there is a definite change in the financial dynamics. The only definite concern is for the well being of the community is being a Town funding resource.

Q. What affect does the Corona virus have on us as far as overall rates, payments, and bill collections?

Response: SELCO opted into the American Cable Association and the FCC's "America Connected Pledge" to discontinue terminations for customers struggling to pay their bills due to the impacts of the Corona virus. Working with the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, extended payment plans to businesses. Keeping close tabs on developments and how other cable operators across the country are handling the situation. Having regular webinars with ACA and NCTC. Contacted NEPPA, suggested having a webinar for a credit and collections roundtable. Get stats from the state; have someone from the DPU sit in on the call to help utilities navigate the crisis compassionately. The webinar is scheduled for April 27, 2020.

Q. K. Mizikar: Have you thought about transitioning from your existing role to the General Manager's role? Inherent in any role throughout my career as I have changed positions, there are some blind spots that you do not see but what do you foresee moving into a broader General Manager position as being different from your current role? Especially as it relates to the types of things shifting away from more tasks to broader, general responsibilities

Response: Spent some time with M. Hale to get a sense of what he is working on; on a day to day basis. What are the projects? Where are the areas that may have a direct impact on what he does? Get involved more deeply on the legislative side, in the MEAM Managers' group, deal more with personnel issues. Have a lot of negotiation experience but not specifically with the Union. Will familiarize self to appropriately approach that when the time comes. Strong labor relations is important for successful operations. We rely on all of our employees. Their success is our success. I respect what everyone in our organization does, in the field, in the office, on the phones. All play a huge role in what is done. Try to inform myself on the challenges that some of our field staff face and how I might be able to play a role in improving things. Strongly believe that John Laverty and Ralph Iaccarino overseeing the electric side are totally solid in what they are doing. Definitely a blind spot and will spend some time with that in the transition. Interact more with Town management. Maintain cooperative independence between the Town and SELCO. Work more closely with the Commission. Planning and transition for the Marketing

Q. K. Mizikar: Ultimately there will come the day where a decision has to be made and there is no one else. All eyes are on you but it is your job. How do you see yourself approaching that, squirming in your seat, when there is no one else to go to?

Response: Big fan of the collaborative approach but ultimately "the buck stops here." I will be making decisions that no everyone will like. Need to be ready to handle and own my decisions. Stick with principles that I have in terms of being authentic and the reasons behind the decisions. Keep our ultimate goal of serving the community. Make decisions for the right reasons. There may be a time when I make a wrong decision. On the big decisions, it will be really rare if I am the only one with input. There is humility involved in making those calls.

R. Holland commented that it is lonely at the top. Maintaining your integrity in that position because you make the decisions. You have to be able to stand by them, right or wrong.

R. Holland asked the Committee if they had any questions.

M. Refolo – “I’ve always been impressed with you. I think you did a great job. Appreciate it.”

A. Trippi – “No further questions but thank you very much.”

M. Lemieux – “No further questions. Thank you for your time today. Thank you.”

K. Marshall – “No further question. Great job. Thank you.”

K. Mizikar – “Thank you. Appreciate your time.”

J. Pratt asked R. Holland for a brief piece of advice for day one if she gets the job.

Response: R. Holland state, do not change a thing. Wait until you get into the position. Find out what is going on. You may have an agenda, a one hundred day plan. There are all sorts of leadership type things. Get a sense to see what it is like to sit on the King/Queen’s throne in the office formerly known as Michael’s. The Board is very happy with the status of operations currently. There certainly are challenges ahead that we need to face but I think the biggest thing is to come in on an even keel then consciously make those decisions. You should also feel that when you come into that position, you can talk to any of the Board members freely and openly. The bottom line is do not come in on the first day with an agenda.

R. Holland called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion:

Motion to adjourn and reconvene at 12:30 PM.

Motion made by A. Trippi and seconded by M. Refolo.

Roll call vote:

K. Marshall - “Yes”

M. Lemieux – “Yes”

A. Trippi - “Yes”

M. Refolo – “Yes”

R. Holland – “Yes”

Meeting adjourned – 12:11 PM

4. GM Candidate Interview – Candidate #3 Joel Malaver – 12:30 PM

Mr. Holland called on all members to confirm their presence and ability to hear him.

Roll call vote:

M. Refolo – “Here”

Anthony Trippi – “Here”

Kelly Marshall – “Here”

Maria Lemieux – “Here”

Kevin Mizikar – “Here”

Tom Kennedy – “Here”

Kristina Anderson – “Here”

Kathy Ryba – “Here”

J. Malaver thanked the members of the committee for the opportunity and stated that it is an honor to be with all of them. Worked with SELCO for fifteen years. Has a strong background in technology. Currently the Manager of Cable Operations. Through the years, been involved with multiple projects. Very familiar with the culture and technologies in place. Also on the telecommunications side, also involved in projects with the Town, School Department, and the SCADA system on the electric side of the operations. Person who likes challenges; likes to surround himself with people who know more than him so they can help him get better. Very oriented on providing the best customer experience. It is to his benefit to have the best services. Tells cable techs, while at a customer’s home, address all customer needs. Likes to empower employees so they can make decisions that improve services.

1. If you were chosen as General Manager, how would you manage having two members of your immediate family working under you as General Manager?

Response: Throughout SELCO history, seen different people who are related. One of the previous managers on the electric side had a brother who was working for him. They kept their relationship very professional. There is a similar situation in the Police Department. So far, relationship with family members has been kept professional. Has an advantage with pushing things a bit faster with them.

Part 2 of Question 1. What is your plan to gain a working knowledge of the power side of SELCO operations?

Response: Familiar with what everyone does. Managers meet bi-weekly. All managers express the different projects their working on. Relies on electric operations being managed. Knows basic formulas although not an expert. Will have to start working closer with those never worked with including accounting department and operations with the Town. Familiar with Smart Grid technology and tools. Familiar with the engineering concept; it is very similar to Cable.

2. Assume you are the GM of SELCO. It is midnight during a winter storm and the Internet goes down in three areas of town. What do you do?

Response: Assess the impact, look at the areas that have the largest concentration of customers. Dispatch personnel, trouble shoot, wait for electric to fix, survey, work along with different crews, restore services. If more complicated, call in contractors to help restore services.

Part 2 of Question 2. Are there some synergies that we can use, the Internet losses with electric power, or as well, help us solve any outages that we have on either side, electric or cable?

Response: Cable can see those customers who are on line. As soon as customers go off line, they are referenced to the different circuits that are identified as off line. Those areas are tracked. Data is then shared with the Electric side. Once Cable sees that those customers have come back on line, electric power has been restored.

3. Can you share with us the regulatory and legislative experience you have that would help you in the role of General Manager?

Response: Twice a year, has to file reports with the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) on the integrity of the Cable physical plant including geographical data. Been involved with the electric reports for North America Reliability Corporation (NARC) and FERC, integrity of network connections and cyber security. Worked with the Department of Transportation (DOT.)

Part 2 of Question 3. Have you ever been involved with any legislative efforts or working with any congressional, local, or state government?

Response: During net neutrality, we were a little exposed. Had to work with the past FCC Commissioner. Not much legislation but needs to know of any new regulations as an Internet Service Provider (ISP.)

4. What areas would you consider most important and what criteria would you use to assess SELCO's performance?

Response: On the Cable side, a 99.99% reliability. On the Internet side, it is part of the FCC report where average outage reports are given to the Department of Public Utilities (DPU). There is a lot of risk with the safety of employees. Manages the crew that is out in the public. Trains them on safety and how to use equipment. On the Electric side, very important to train crews handling high voltage. Need to keep employees aware and updated on safety concerns. Cyber security is a main area where important to keep customer data secured and protected. Important to work with FERC and FCC to keep integrity of the network secure. There is a lot to manage.

5. The SELCO GM reports to the five Commissioners but is also the face of SELCO to Shrewsbury's municipal government, its Selectmen and their constituents, Town Meeting Members, and the Shrewsbury town management team. Do you have experience working within this type of construct and are there any challenges or opportunities within that construct?

Response: One of the latest projects is working with the towns of Boylston, West Boylston, and Sterling assisting them in building a fiber trunk. Has made presentations to the many town officials talking about the advantages of owning their own fiber network. Makes presentations to staff about emerging technologies. On occasion, stepped in for his church pastor and preached to a congregation of over one hundred people. Assisted the current GM with presentations in gathering data. Been involved in projects on the town side with the previous Town Manager and the School Department especially during the COVID-19 crisis. Involved with students at home who did not have Internet access. Assisted IT Department getting people to work remotely. Accesses VPN system remotely to restore services when needed.

6. How do you manage people who report directly to you and what is your management philosophy?

Response: My management style is a combination of pace setting and authoritative. Has certain set of standards; leads by example. Likes to empower teammates to make decisions and learn from that kind of experience. If I do not know something, I ask for help or try to learn it. Tries to motivate employees to perform their tasks. On the authoritative side, states the goals and lets employees take charge.

Part 2 of Question 6. Give an example of frequently you meet with teams and how you establish lines of communication.

Response: Because of Covid-19, up and down communication has been key. Ensure that everyone is aware of what is happening and what the tasks are. Tries to meet with people more often; reviews projects once or twice a week. Tries to learn from mistakes or what can be improved. Project tracking is key.

7. What would you see as important performance metrics for the GM?

Response: First of all, customer satisfaction. Make sure that customers are satisfied with services being provided. SELCO conducts surveys every two years to subscribers. Questions are asked as to how well SELCO is performing both electric and cable. Social media gives immediate feedback as to how well SELCO is performing. Other things to use include job performance reviews where goals are set that helps manage success of the teams. Financial reports are supplied to the Commission. Keep a keen eye to make sure expenses are within budget. More people are streaming. Telecommunications is doing well, not being directly affected by Covid-19 as are other markets although when customers lose their job during this time, most likely they will cancel Internet services.

8. What, in your opinion, are the most significant changes impacting the electric utility industry?

Response: Not an expert in this field however attended a conference last year, Fiber To The Home council, where the talk was about how constantly changing technology was impacting the industry. On the Cable side, a networking path is created to services, i.e. Netflix, Hulu, etc. On the Electric side, there is a push to reduce the carbon footprint, becoming more green/energy efficient. Utilities are using technologies, i.e. Smart Grid, to manage and track outages to better

know the real time consumption while the consumer is unable to track their consumption. The Smart Home allows the consumer to know, for example, how much electricity their appliances are using. Once electric vehicles become popular, there will be energy peaks whereby with the Smart Home, the consumer may schedule charging their Smart Vehicle and using some appliances on off peak hours. SELCO is uniquely positioned to make the bridge of the Smart Grid with the Smart Home. SELCO is building the customer's network, managing their devices, helping them to connect through SELCO's wireless routers. Technology will allow the consumer to manage all their electric appliances within their own home.

Part 2 of Question 8. What are the most significant challenges impacting the Cable and Internet Service Provider aspects of the business?

Response: 5G is a common thread that people are talking about although it is not a threat because SELCO is uniquely positioned owning the fiber and the poles. Shrewsbury was working with Braintree and Norwood municipals creating a permanent application for pole attachments. Electric needs to work with the different carriers to decide which poles to use in order to install their antennas; a challenge on both the Cable and Electric side. SELCO is uniquely positioned to build Fiber To The Home or Fiber To The Premises. Cable is doing a lot of backhaul for companies, i.e. AT&T, T-Mobile, and will continue. Cable will be building the fiber throughout Shrewsbury. The fiber can be used for providing services to customers, i.e. higher Internet speeds and backhaul to transport wireless carriers like Verizon, AT&T, etc. With cyber security, SELCO continues educating customers informing them of possible cyber threats. There is always new technology coming out that is key to expanding services and increasing revenue. It is important to keep an eye out for emerging technologies to provide better services to consumers.

9. Efforts to get to "net zero" greenhouse gas emissions are gaining regulatory and legislative traction in Massachusetts. Do you have an opinion on if and how renewable energy fits into power supply planning for a utility such as us?

Response: SELCO works with the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) who helps manage SELCO's portfolio and ensures that within that portfolio there is the state mandated minimum for green electricity. We rely on many consultants who are assisting a lot of municipalities within the state. By 2050, all the electric utilities have to have at least 80% of their electric source has to be coming from energy efficient or green technologies. We must continue to work with the consultants and use technology to our advantage. SELCO has solar farms in Town. The next step is battery storage. The technology is emerging where batteries are longer lasting, more affordable. The future is becoming more green and more energy efficient; becoming a Smart City.

Part 2 of Question 9. Does peak shaving come into all of this as well?

Response: Not an expert but through a number of webinars, keeping an eye on the market and the changes in pricing. Technology could play a good role into alerting the consumer to use electricity on off peak hours.

10. Where do you see the cable ecosystem in five years and what do you see as the priority areas for SELCO to address proactively?

Response: In the future, there will be more Internet connectivity. The industry is becoming more of a “dump pipe” where customers want to have an open connection to self-subscribe to services, i.e. Hulu, Netflix. Everything is going to be more streaming in the future. Services are going to change a little bit where our cable technicians are becoming more of a telecommunications technician, assisting customers in setting up Smart appliances in their homes.

11. Can you explain what you have been doing with the node splitting during the Corona virus?

Response: As soon as customers started working from home, the growth in consumption grew by 50%. As a result, 15% of SELCO’s areas were congested, hitting over 95% congestion. Certain nodes were split to accommodate the increase in load.

12. Any questions for us?

J. Malaver Q. Are you planning on making changes soon? Are you looking for the next General Manager to start making changes on how we are operating? Do you see anything that needs to be improved right away? Are you happy with the way SELCO is conducting business?

Response: R. Holland stated that the Commission is very satisfied with the management as it is today, with the team that is in place, and where SELCO stands currently. We also know that when the new General Manager comes in, will eventually take us in maybe a slightly different direction as we get different challenges. From day one we do not need a slash and burn mentality from the new manager to come in and change operations. Currently, there are no big changes that we see. We may have to redirect our attention to how long the Corona virus affect is going to be here. Believes there will be a long term affect, i.e. customers paying their bills, etc. It will be a challenge for a new General Manager.

R. Holland asked if the Board had any other questions for J. Malaver.

K. Mizikar: There will be a point in time when the entire organization will look to you to make decisions. How do you think you will react to that and what will you do to prepare yourself for making decisions even if it is not necessarily in your wheel house; within the Cable or IT area?

Response: There is a very strong team including Financial, Accounting, IT, and Marketing. I have always tended to rely on team members. Will listen and learn. Not a person to make reactive decisions. Wants to hear all points of view then make own, considerable decision.

M. Refolo – “No further questions. Great job, Joel.”

K. Marshall – “No. Thank you very much, Joel.”

M. Lemieux – “No further questions. Thanks so much, Joel.”

A. Trippi – “No other questions. Thank you, Joel.”

The next meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2020 at 1:00 PM. Open Session; regular business meeting that will include an agenda item to select the next SELCO General Manager.

5. Motion to Adjourn

A motion:

Motion to adjourn.

Motion made by A. Trippi and seconded by K. Marshall.

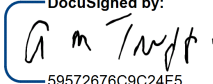
Roll Call:

M. Lemieux –	“Yes”
M. Refolo –	“Yes”
K. Marshall –	“Yes”
A. Trippi –	“Yes”
R. Holland -	“Yes”

R. Holland thanked SMC for their help in this endeavor.

Meeting adjourned: 1:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

DocuSigned by:

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Anthony Trippi, Clerk
SELCO Commission